


Remarks

Upon entry of the instant Preliminary Amendment, claims 1-11 and 17 are pending. Claims 12-16 have been canceled. Multiple dependencies have been eliminated from claims 3-11 without prejudice to the filing of claims directed to such subject matter in this or a subsequent application. New claim 17 is based on the preferred element eliminated from claim 9. The amendments are primarily a matter of form. No new matter has been added.

In view of the foregoing amendments, Applicants aver that the instant claims are now in better condition for examination on the merits. Early favorable action is respectfully solicited. If minor amendments will further prosecution, Applicants request that the Examiner contact the undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted


David R. Crichton
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 37,300

Ciba Specialty Chemicals Corporation
540 White Plains Road
P.O. Box 2005
Tarrytown, New York 10591-9005
Tel: 914-785-7124
Fax: 914-785-7102
DRC/

Amended Claims with Mark-Ups

3. (amended) A composition according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~ in which the polymer (b) has intrinsic viscosity of from 9 to 12 dl/g.

4. (amended) A composition according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~ in which the polymer (b) is formed from water-soluble monomer or monomer blend comprising at least 50 wt.% anionic monomer.

5. (amended) A composition according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~ in which the polymer (b) is formed from water-soluble monomer blend comprising from 60 to 80 wt.% anionic monomer and from 40 to 20 wt.% non-ionic monomer.

6. (amended) A composition according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~ in which the polymer (b) is a copolymer of acrylamide with an alkali metal salt of acrylic acid.

7. (amended) A composition according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~ in which the polymer (b) is present in an amount of from 2 to 5 wt.%.

8. (amended) A composition according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~ in which the fertiliser (a) is present in an amount of from 20 to 60 wt.%.

9. (amended) A composition according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~ which has a viscosity of not more than 4,000 cps, ~~preferably not more than 1,000 cps.~~

10. (amended) A composition according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~ which has a viscosity of from 200 to 500 cps.

11. (amended) A composition according to ~~any preceding claim 1~~ in which the polymer (b) has been added to the composition in the form of a powder.

~~12. A soil treatment process comprising irrigating an area of soil with water to which has~~

been added an aqueous soil treatment composition as defined in claim 1.

13. A process according to claim 12 in which the irrigation is by furrow irrigation, drip irrigation or spray irrigation.

14. A process according to claim 12 in which water is pumped through feed ducting and a mixing zone to a spray manifold supplying one or more spraying devices by which the water is sprayed onto a crop area and the aqueous soil treatment composition is metered into the water at or before the mixing zone.

15. A method for the production of an aqueous soil treatment composition as defined in claim 1 comprising providing an aqueous solution of fertiliser (a) and mixing with it polymer (b) in powder form.

16. A process according to claim 12 or a method according to claim 15 in which the aqueous soil treatment composition has any of the additional features of claims 2 to 10.

17. (new) A composition according to claim 9 which has a viscosity of not more than 1,000 cps.